

1866-1867.

NEW-YEAR'S DAY.

Its Celebration in Ancient and Modern Times.

How it was Observed by the Ancient Saxons and Romans.

How it is Observed in England, Scotland, France, and the United States.

New-Year's Gifts—The Wassail-Bowl—Hogmanay—The Guisiers—New-Year's Calls.

Binging Out the Old Year, and Ringing in the New.

Etc., Etc., Etc., Etc., Etc., Etc.

The month of January was, by the ancient Saxons, sometimes termed Wolf-month, or "Wolf Month," because at this season of the year the wolves were impelled by hunger to leave their haunts in the wilderness, and prey upon man himself, and the animals which he had domesticated for his own use.

The First Day of the New Year. According to the present method of computing time, this system still prevails. But in the old calendars of the Jews, Egyptians, and Greeks, such was not the case.

In the calendar of the Roman Catholic Church the first day of January is celebrated as the feast of the "Circumcisio Domini," or the Circumcision of our Lord; which, according to the customs of the Jews, must have taken place on the eighth day after his birth.

New Year's Day Among the Romans was an occasion of considerable rejoicing, which was manifested in the congratulations, visits, and presents which were then made.

Such was the undoubted origin of the present custom of making presents to one's relatives and friends on the first day of the New Year.

New Year's Day in England is not at present honored with much special observation. The hearty demonstrations of joy which characterize the Christmas season appear to exhaust the time and resources of a majority of the people, who by this day have betaken themselves to their customary avocations.

the great holiday of Scotland as well as of England:—

"Yule come and Yule's game, And we have feasted well; For Yule means to his fall seat, And Jenny to her wheel."

New Year's-day Among the Ancient Saxons of the northern section of the country, however, was the occasion of more than ordinary jollity and feasting.

New Year's Gifts in Olden Times. The giving and receiving of these little mementoes of friendship were accompanied by hearty expressions of good-will, generally couched in the still-popular form of wishing "a happy New Year."

It was sometimes the custom to pay these compliments at the door of the recipient, in the form of the song. But it was more usual for the house to be entered early in the morning by the younger of the neighbors, bearing the spiced-bowl, and addressing their hosts with the salutations of the season.

The gifts were not necessarily of much intrinsic value. In the sixteenth century, it seems that the New Year's gift of a tenant to his landlord was usually in the shape of a capon.

One of the most valuable presents made in those days was in the form of gloves, which were then much more costly than at present.

In the beginning of the sixteenth century, metallic pins were first brought into general use; and so novel and convenient were they, that they soon came to be in great demand as New Year's gifts for ladies.

In Scotland, it was the custom in old times for persons to send presents to their friends on New Year's Eve; but on the following day, when the donors called upon the recipients to wish them "A happy New Year," they would ask for gifts in return.

In the way of receiving gifts at New Year's, the English sovereigns appear to have been particularly fortunate. The custom can be traced back to the reign of Henry VI., and Matthew Paris has even accused Henry III. of extorting them openly from his subjects.

There is still preserved a manuscript roll, which shows that, in the reign of Philip and Mary, Cardinal Pole presented his sovereigns with a "salette," having a cover of silver and gilt, and a representation, in enamel, of the story of Job.

It has been said that the magnificent wardrobe of Queen Elizabeth was kept up by these New Year's contributions from her subjects. It is certain that during her reign the practice was carried to its greatest height. The presents received every year by the Queen were inscribed on a roll, which was signed by herself, and duly attested by the proper officers.

James I., like his predecessor, received many gifts of money of considerable amount, but there was a great falling off in the number and value of the ornamental articles.

although it is not probable that the custom ceased entirely until during the Commonwealth. It was one of the customs that was not revived on the restoration of the Stuarts.

The Wassail-Bowl in Olden Times. Among the ancient popular customs of the New Year season was the assembling of the family around a bowl of spiced ale, which was termed "lamb's wool."

The following stanza will serve as a specimen of the songs which were sung over the Wassail-Bowl:—

"Wassail! wassail! over the town, Our toast it is white, our ale it is brown; Our bowl it is made of the maple tree, We be good fellows all; I drink to thee."

It is not surprising that the jolly monks opened the doors of their monasteries to the Wassail-Bowl, which, in their language, was styled Poculum Caritatis. The abbot placed himself at the head of the table, and drank from the mighty bowl to the health of all present, and each of them, in turn, then drank to the health of the others.

"Hogmanay," or New Year's Eve in Scotland.

Although the old-fashioned Wassail-Bowl has long been a stranger to England, it was still in vogue in Scotland to within a recent period. Just as the clock announced the departure of the old year, the members of the family would each take a sip from the mixture of hot ale, spiced and sweetened, wishing the rest "A good health and a happy New Year, and many of them!"

New Year's Eve in Scotland is known as Hogmanay, a term which has puzzled antiquarians and philologists not a little. It is still the custom in the country districts, and in the more retired towns, for the children of the poor to have themselves arrayed in a monstrous sheet, arranged in front in the form of a deep pocket.

The "Guisiers," or Mummings in Scotland. The favorite night for the operations of the guisiers or guisards, as the "mummers" are called in Scotland, is New Year's Eve.

The favorite night for the operations of the guisiers or guisards, as the "mummers" are called in Scotland, is New Year's Eve. The boys who take part in the ceremony array themselves in the old shirts of their fathers, and in fanciful head-gears of brown paper.

Each guiser is attended by a squire, in the dress of a girl, with an old woman's cap upon his head and a broomstick in his hand. The squire is always known as "Bessie." His functions—or hers, if you like, as the doubtful gender troubles us not a little—are to walk before his principal for the purpose of opening such doors and gates as may stand in his way.

New-Year's Gifts in France. The passage of New-Year's gifts between relatives and friends has fallen into decline in England; but in France the practice is still kept up.

The people in these times would start forth early in the morning to pay their New Year's calls, visiting their relatives in the order of their relationship, and after them their acquaintances, according to the strength of their friendships, and interchanging with all their bonds and other sweetmeats.

During the Bourbon days of the present century, it was customary for every member of the royal family to make a present to the king, and sometimes the offerings received at the Tuilleries could be measured by the cart load.

with dancing, cards, and games of various kinds.

New Year's Day in the United States. A glance at the New Year customs of our own country will show them to be greatly diversified, according to locality; and even entirely lacking in many sections of the country.

Yet the day is a legal holiday in most of the States; and in all of them, we believe, it is customary for the family to observe the occasion, if in no other way, at least by sitting down to a dinner prepared with more than the usual care and at more than the usual expense.

In those localities in which the first day of the New Year is considered worthy of a special observance, the favorite method of complying with the demands of the occasion is by a series of New Year's calls. Judging from the little favor with which this custom has been received by the good people of our own city, we should infer that they consider it about the most ridiculous and distressing custom that was ever invented for the amusement of mortal men and women—and we think they are about right.

Although the science of making New Year's calls has been elaborated to the greatest possible extent in New York, it is highly favored in our own sensible city, the thing is considered a nuisance, and very generally treated as such.

Watch-Meetings in the United States. The denomination of Methodists in this country have long been accustomed to gather together for conference and prayer, just as the old year is waning.

Ring out the Old Year and Ring in the New. But in the estimation of the world at large the New Year is most appropriately ushered in by a carnival of noise. It is almost as great a nuisance as the distracting uproar of tin horns on Christmas Eve; but there is some sense and great appropriateness in it, nevertheless.

But in the estimation of the world at large the New Year is most appropriately ushered in by a carnival of noise. It is almost as great a nuisance as the distracting uproar of tin horns on Christmas Eve; but there is some sense and great appropriateness in it, nevertheless.

The spirit which underlies this ceremony of ringing in the New Year has been beautifully expressed by Tennyson, in the following lines, with which we bring our New Year's Greeting to a close:—

"Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky, The flying cloud, the frosty light; The year is dying in the night; Ring out the old, ring in the new; Ring, happy bells, across the snow; The year is going, let him go; Ring out the false, ring in the true."

DRY GOODS.

J. C. STRAWBRIDGE & CO.

COTTON GOODS.

THE VERY LOW PRICE OF COTTON GOODS SHOULD INDUCE CAREFUL HOUSE-KEEPERS AT ONCE TO LAY IN A STOCK.

YARD-WIDE SHIRTING MUSLINS, 21 CENTS.

9-4 WIDE HEAVY SHEETING MUSLINS, 65 CENTS.

3-4 WIDE PILLOW MUSLINS, 25 CENTS.

WIDE SHEETINGS

AT GREAT REDUCTION,

10-4 WALTHAM SHEETINGS, 11-4 UTICA SHEETINGS, 11-4 HUGENOT SHEETINGS, 12-4 HUGENOT SHEETINGS, 9-4 WALTHAM SHEETINGS, 8-4 WALTHAM SHEETINGS.

WE HAVE NOW IN STOCK,

AT THE REDUCED RATES,

NEW YORK MILLS, WAMUTTA, WILLIAMSVILLE, FORESTDALE, WHITNEY, ANOSKEAG A, HOUSEKEEPER,

BY THE PIECE,

AT WHOLESALE RATES.

Pillow Muslins at the Lowest Prices.

5-4 WALTHAM PILLOW MUSLINS, 5-4 UTICA PILLOW MUSLINS, 5-4 WAMUTTA PILLOW MUSLINS.

10 Bales Unbleached Muslins.

FINE YARD-WARD UNBLEACHED MUSLINS, 32 CENTS.

EXTRA HEAVY YARD-WIDE MUSLINS, 23 CENTS.

HEAVY WIDE UNBLEACHED SHEETING MUSLINS.

MUSLINS BY THE PIECE

AT WHOLESALE RATES.

J. C. STRAWBRIDGE & CO.

NORTHWEST CORNER

EIGHTH AND MARKET STS.

DRY GOODS.

INAUGURATION

A CHEAP DEPARTMENT

LADIES' CLOAKS.

ONE THOUSAND GARMENTS,

From \$5.00 to \$25.00,

BEING IN MANY CASES ABOUT ONE HALF!

THE CURRENCY VALUE.

J. W. PROCTOR & CO., NO. 920 CHESNUT ST.

ALL OUR

PARIS CLOAKS,

AS WELL AS FINE GARMENTS

Of Our Own Manufacture,

ARE THIS DAY REDUCED 25 PER CENT.

BELOW FORMER PRICES.

J. W. PROCTOR & CO., No. 920 CHESNUT St.

OUR STOCK

LADIES' DRESS FURS

IS THIS SEASON THE LARGEST AND CHOICEST

WE HAVE EVER EXHIBITED.

It comprises RUSSIAN SABLE, THE MOST VALUABLE OF ALL FURS.

HUDSON BAY SABLE. Which ranks next in elegance and variety to the Russian.

EASTERN AMERICAN SABLE. A popular and durable Fur.

ERMINE, ASTRACHAN, RUSSIAN SQUIRREL.

GREY CRIMEAN, PERSIANNE, FINE CHINCHILLA

Besides many other varieties.

EVERY GARMENT

Has been critically examined, and none allowed to be displayed for sale unless perfect in every respect

ALL FURS sold by us are warranted NATURAL COLOR. FURS cleaned, altered, and repaired. SHIPPING FURS BOUGHT. J. W. PROCTOR & CO. No. 920 CHESNUT Street.